

Maria Cristina Carlini
**MATERIE
 VIVENTI**

Materie viventi
Maria Cristina Carlini's installations at Palazzo Reale
as part of SUART 2026 (SUstainable ART)

curated by Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico

Milan, Palazzo Reale | 10 July – 30 August 2026

Milan, 9th June 2026 – **Palazzo Reale** presents **Materie viventi** by the artist **Maria Cristina Carlini**, one of the most influential figures in Italian sculpture of recent decades. Held in the Courtyard of Honour and the Garden from 10 July to 30 August 2026, the exhibition has been organised to coincide with **SUART 2026**, an event comprising an international conference on sustainability in art and an exhibition of the sculptor's work.

The exhibition, promoted by the Municipality of Milan – Culture and produced by Palazzo Reale and the **Maria Cristina Carlini ETS Foundation** in collaboration with **Ethicando Association**, is curated by **Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico**, art critic and founder of the **SUART** event.

Materie viventi will open on Thursday 9 July 2026, marking the conclusion of the SUART 2026 conference, and will offer the public **an immersive experience** in one of the city's most iconic locations.

Maria Cristina Carlini's artistic practice, developed over more than fifty years, stems from a **direct relationship with matter** – often natural or recycled – understood as a living organism and a repository of memory. In *Materie viventi*, this approach takes shape in minimalist works and a close dialogue with the space, where sustainability and transformation emerge as a concrete creative practice.

The exhibition itinerary brings together **two monumental works** by the artist, conceived as elements that engage in dialogue with the architecture of Palazzo Reale and its outdoor spaces: **Bosco (2012) in the Courtyard of Honour and Filemone e Bauci (2021) in the Garden**. In a reciprocal and circular interplay, the sculptures guide the public through a sensory experience, enhanced by a lighting design that amplifies their symbolic resonance.

BOSCO (2012) – The sculpture consists of 19 iron elements arranged in a spiral, like a growing organism that invites the eye to move from the edge towards the centre. The choice of metal – durable yet susceptible to oxidation – highlights Carlini's artistic vision: essential forms that retain traces and memories. The modular rhythm suggests a plant community, a 'forest' that is not depicted but evoked, in which verticality and the spaces between the forms become a place for passage and contemplation.

FILEMONE E BAUCI (2021) – In the Garden, the work combines reclaimed wood, iron and gold, creating a tension between fragility and durability, humble materials and preciousness. The title refers to the myth recounted by Ovid, a story of hospitality and fidelity that here becomes a metaphor for care: for others and for the natural world. The wooden surfaces, marked by their past, interact with the metal elements and with gold as a symbolic, rather than ornamental, light that emerges as a promise of regeneration. Situated between architecture and greenery, the work engages in a direct dialogue with the landscape and with the idea of transformation as an ethical, as well as a formal, possibility.

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*“The work stems from the need to bring together past and present. Reclaimed wood bears witness to a previous existence, whilst steel is more closely associated with the idea of technology and modernity” says the artist **Maria Cristina Carlini**. “In my artistic expression, there is a very strong reference to primal origins, the archaic and memory; in these, I seek and find the essence, I feel the sensation of grasping the profound, of eliminating the superfluous and of reaching the heart, the primal core of things and of ourselves. In this sense, memory is a fundamental element as it represents our identity. My aim is to generate an emotion that can spring from an archaic memory shared by many people. I seek the essence because within it, it is possible to find a collective feeling, as it stems from a deep ancestral source. Materials inspire me. I seek them out everywhere, especially wood, to give them a new life. Their stories are brought back to life in the sculptures, transforming into a contemporary narrative.”*

*«In Materie viventi sustainability is neither an ideological premise nor a programmatic intention; rather, it is the natural outcome of a profound relationship between the artist and matter. Maria Cristina Carlini immerses herself in the materials – often recycled – listens to their ancestral pulse and guides them through an alchemical transformation that breathes new life into them, giving rise to compelling reflections on the fate of humankind, the natural world and the defining values of our contemporary era,” comments **Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico**, curator of the exhibition and founder of **SUART (Sustainable ART)**. “Carlini’s works thus become vehicles for reflection on the great existential and social issues of the present – from safeguarding the planet to the crisis of values – in full harmony with the leitmotif of **SUART 2026**, which explores the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability in contemporary art”.*

Maria Cristina Carlini

She is one of the leading figures in contemporary Italian sculpture. Her artistic career began in the early 1970s in Palo Alto, where she initially focused on working with ceramics. She subsequently broadened her artistic research through the use of different materials – including stoneware, iron, Corten steel, reclaimed wood and paper – developing an original artistic language based on the relationship between matter, memory, nature and transformation. Throughout her career, she has created monumental sculptures as well as small and medium-sized works, which are now housed in numerous public and private collections across Europe, America and Asia. Several monumental installations are permanently situated in institutional venues and international urban spaces. Her work has been accompanied by significant publications and critical contributions from scholars and art historians, including Paolo Campiglio, Luciano Caramel, Claudio Cerritelli, Vittoria Coen, Guo Xiao Chuan, Martina Corgnati, Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico, Gillo Dorfles, Carlo Franza, Maria Fratelli, Chiara Gatti, Flaminio Gualdoni, Yacouba Konaté, Frédérique Malaval, Laurence Pauliac, Elena Pontiggia and Cortney Stell. She lives and works in Milan, where in 2025 she established the **Fondazione Maria Cristina Carlini ETS**, founded with the aim of preserving and promoting her artistic heritage and fostering dialogue with cultural institutions, museums and universities. Among her most recent institutional recognitions, in 2026 several of her works were selected for **SUART 2026** at the Chamber of Deputies in Rome, as part of an international forum dedicated to the relationship between art, culture and sustainability. On 21 June 2026, the monumental sculpture *Origine* (2019) was added to the permanent collection of the **Horti dell’Almo Collegio Borromeo** park, further enriching its artistic holdings.

SUART 2026 (Sustainable ART)

SUART (Sustainable ART) is an international event with an academic, interdisciplinary, institutional and artistic focus, dedicated to analysing the evolution of the concept of sustainability in art within the traditional dimensions

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of sustainable development, namely environmental, social and economic sustainability.

The forum brings together institutions, universities and stakeholders from the cultural and economic sectors in a discussion aimed at highlighting the role of art as a driver of sustainable development and cultural policy.

SUART, together with SUSTART (SUSTainable ART), both conceived by Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico, represent the two principal platforms for public scientific and institutional debate on the theme of sustainability in art promoted by the 'Sustainable Art' scientific committee of the Ethicando Association.

Whilst SUART, with its predominantly scientific focus, is organised annually in institutional museum and/or academic/university venues in Italy and/or abroad, SUSTART, which has a more institutional focus involving mainly representatives of local, national and international public bodies, takes place in Rome at the Chamber of Deputies.

The 2026 edition of SUART builds on previous editions, developed in international contexts and in dialogue with academic and cultural institutions: in 2024 at the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, with a solo exhibition by Antonietta Viganone, and in 2025 in Milan at the Fabbrica del Vapore, as part of Milan ArtWeek, with an exhibition dedicated to Tiziano Calcari.

SUART 2026's university partners are the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid, the University of Milan, the University of Florence, and UnitelmaSapienza University in Rome. The entire event is held under the patronage – amongst others – of the Cento Amici del Libro Association, the Antonietta Viganone Foundation and the Sangregorio Giancarlo Foundation, as well as other public and private bodies. The forum and the exhibition opening enjoy the patronage of the Ministry of Enterprise and Made in Italy.

INFORMATION

Title: Maria Cristina Carlini. Materie viventi

Curator: Marco Eugenio Di Giandomenico

Technical Installation Manager: Giuseppe Tortato, architect, Studio Giuseppe Tortato Architetti

Design Team: Andrea Montironi, Giulia Chiappelli

Structural Engineer: Gianluca Puccetti

Safety Manager: Alessandro Fontana

Venue: Milan, Palazzo Reale, Courtyard of Honour and Garden

Dates: 10 July – 30 August 2026

Press preview in the presence of the artist and curator: 9 July from 10.00 am to 11.00 am

Admission: free

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An exhibition organised by the Municipality of Milan – Culture Department, Palazzo Reale, the Maria Cristina Carlini ETS Foundation, in collaboration with Ethicando Association and Betting On Italy.

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